THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (c) to (e) Yes, Sir. The Government is contemplating the establishment of an autonomous Authority to regulate content on TV channels. A draft Bill is under preparation.

(b) Prasar Bharati has informed that a conference of regional news units of northern region of All India Radio was held in Shimla on 20th & 21st June, 2005. This conference was held with the aim of improving the quality of news programming at regional level. It also discussed issues like introduction of new technology and utilisation of new range of equipment.

Employees working in Prasar Bharati

†48. SHRI MOTILAL VORA:
SHRI JANARDAN DWIVEDI:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the position of employees working in Prasar Bharati;

(b) whether they are Government employees or that of Prasar Bharati;

(c) the terms of service of these employees; and

(d) whether the rules applicable to the Government employees are also applicable to the employees of Prasar Bharati?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (d) Most of the employees presently working in Prasar Bharati are Central Government employees. They are on deemed deputation on terms applicable to Central Government employees.

Ban on channels in Bhutan

†49. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Bhutan has imposed ban on many channels being telecast from India;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, the names of such channels;

(c) the reasons stated by Bhutan therefor; and

(d) Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) Cable operators of Bhutan had taken off the air following foreign/Indian channels in Bhutan from April 1, 2005:

* FTV
* Ten Sports
* All regional Indian channels like SUN TV, Asianet, ETV Bangla
* News channels like Aaj Tak, Zee News.

There was no formal directive from the Government and the above decision was taken by the cable operators themselves, following a series of articles which appeared in the media in Bhutan.

(c) As per these newspapers articles, the widespread feeling in Bhutan was that some channels were culturally degrading and undermining Bhutanese cultural values, besides distracting students from their studies.

(d) Indian Embassy in Bhutan has taken up the matter with the Government authorities both formally and informally, and most of the regional and news channels have since been restored.

Telecast of obscene and defamatory programmes by Cable TV

50. DR. VIJAY MALLYA:
SHRI LALIT SURI:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that in spite of the provisions of the Cable Television Network (Regulation) Amendment Act, 2002 and the rules made thereunder, some of the cable operators are telecasting news and other features which are obscene, defamatory and are likely to create disaffection among the people;